

# *the* polyglot

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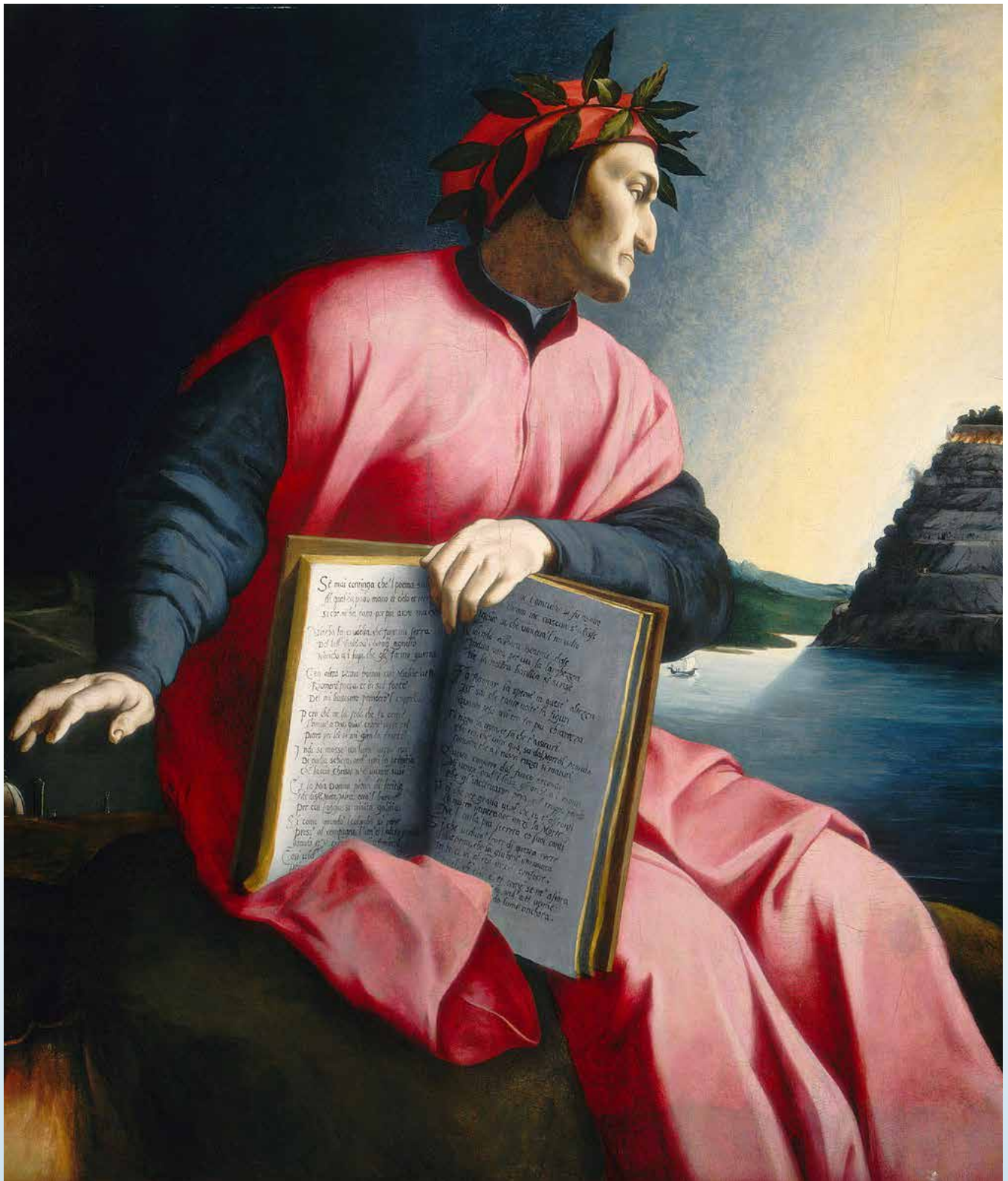
**EXPLORE. ENGAGE.  
QUESTION THE STATUS QUO.  
BECOME A GLOBAL CITIZEN.**



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Artist Unknown, Allegorical Portrait of Dante, 16th century

# A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM CHAIRPERSON

**G**reetings from the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures!

Emerging from a daunting otherworldly voyage, the medieval poet Dante Alighieri concluded the first book of his *Divine Comedy* with these hopeful words: *Uscimmo a riveder le stelle* (“We came forth to see again the stars”). 2020-2021 was filled with the hurdles, anxieties, and ups-and-downs of an epic journey, but it also offered inspiring sparks of light in our shared resilience and our commitment to facing the critical challenges of today – from the global pandemic to the ongoing reckoning with our country’s legacy of racism. In 2020-2021, we learned to live with uncertainty and find opportunity in challenge. We harnessed technology to engage our students, and began to return to the classroom while focusing on the safety of our community. We renewed our dedication to the core principles of the DLLC: fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in our pedagogy and practice, valuing and respecting difference, and engaging meaningfully with diverse ideas, perspectives, and cultures. Whether face-to-face or over Zoom, these values are always central to the DLLC experience, in the classroom and in all aspects of department life.

This issue of the *polyglot* highlights some of the many ways in which DLLC faculty, students, and staff are engaging with these principles: from new and planned additions to our language curriculum – including Korean and American Sign Language – to the wide spectrum of activities sponsored by the DLLC Antiracism, Diversity, and Equity Committee. You can read about the exciting events we held over the past year, including a lecture by Fabienne Kanor, author of *Humus* – a moving account, based

on historical records, of fourteen African women who choose death over enslavement (Kanor was accompanied by DLLC alumna Lynn Palermo, who translated the book into English). Our Japanese Studies Program, in collaboration with the University of Delaware Anti-Racism Initiative Asian American Sub-Committee and others, presented two films devoted to the lives of Yuri Kochiyama, the Japanese-American civil rights activist, and Grace Lee Boggs, the Chinese-American civil rights activist. In these pages, you can also learn about the antiracism and diversity work our faculty are incorporating into their pedagogy, scholarship, and leadership activities.

As always, this issue of the *polyglot* highlights the academic achievements and study abroad adventures of our outstanding students, as well as updates from our alumni. And we are delighted to recognize the impressive accomplishments and contributions of our DLLC faculty, from recent publications to grants, awards, and honors – read on for details! We also introduce you to our three new faculty members in the DLLC: Dr. Steven Alcorn (Assistant Professor of Spanish), Dr. Holly Myers (Assistant Professor of Russian), and Dr. Lillyrose Veneziano Broccia (Assistant Professor of Italian). Lastly, warm congratulations to our newly-promoted faculty: Dr. Rachael Hutchinson (Japanese) promoted to the rank of Professor, and Dr. Renee Dong (Chinese), promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.

It is a true testament to the power of the DLLC community that – no matter the circumstances – we have continued to offer our students the same challenging, engaging, and immersive educational experience we are known for. Our faculty and students have shown profound dedication and flexibility.

Nor could we do it without the assistance of our wonderful office staff: many thanks to Ms. Ariadne Lopez, Ms. Jane Branden, Ms. MaryAnn Hackett, and Ms. Kathleen Turner. And, of course, a special thanks to the *polyglot*’s editor, Dr. Meghan Dabkowski, Assistant Professor of Spanish, Portuguese and Linguistics.

As we head into this new academic year, we look forward to welcoming our community back to Jastak- Burgess Hall. We deeply appreciate your generous support of the students and programs in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures. Thought-provoking, enriching pedagogical programming, and exciting opportunities for internships and study abroad are integral to the unique educational experience we offer to our students on their journey to become global citizens. Your help makes it all possible! To make a donation, please visit the link below. And please visit [our website](#) to learn more about our activities!



**MEREDITH RAY**  
*Interim Chair, Languages,  
Literatures and Cultures*  
*Elias Ahuja Professor of Italian*

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# Antiracism, Equity, and Diversity Efforts in the DLLC

In response to the nationwide concern with racism in summer 2020, an ad-hoc ‘antiracism working group’ was convened to discuss possibilities for initiatives in our department. The group is composed of faculty who expressed early interest and enthusiasm in response to Interim Department Chair Meredith K. Ray’s call for ideas on increasing diversity and addressing issues of racism and discrimination in the DLLC: Associate Professor of French Edgard Sankara and Professor of Japanese and Game Studies Rachael Hutchinson (co-chairs), Associate Professor of Chinese Jianguo Chen, Instructor of Spanish Fatima Haq, Associate Professor of Spanish



Committee co-chairs Dr. Edgard Sankara and Dr. Rachael Hutchinson

Gladys Ilarregui, Associate Professor of Spanish Meghan McInnis-Domínguez, Senior Instructor of French Flora Poindexter, and Assistant Professor of Spanish Aurelia Rio. In Spring 2021, the

committee determined the name of the group going forward would be the Antiracism, Equity, and Diversity Committee (henceforth AEDC), a special committee of the Department which will replace the inactive Minority Affairs Committee. In the Fall 2021 semester, the AEDC welcomed additional members, Associate Professor of Arabic Ikram Masmoudi, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Eynat Gutman and Assistant Professor of Spanish, Portuguese, and Linguistics Meghan Dabkowski.

The overall purpose and mission of the working group was easily determined: “To create an equitable working

environment in the DLLC for all faculty, in which all faculty should be treated equally, with respect based on our shared humanity.’ Other aims are to clarify steps that faculty and students can take in the department and on campus if they encounter problems with racism and discriminatory practices. The committee will act as a support and point of contact for people, serving as an advocate and ally for faculty and students in approaching the UD Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI). On the pedagogical front, the committee is working with DLLC faculty to brainstorm ways to decolonize the curriculum and expand our current course offerings. Finally, the AEDC aims to establish and improve concrete policies in DLLC regarding structural equity, for example equitable access to faculty resources as well as work opportunities. Over the past year, the AEDC has made progress on these aims and met some of the initial objectives.

One of the committee’s first actions in summer 2020 was to work with Interim Department Chair Meredith K. Ray to draft and post a clear statement on the DLLC website and related DLLC materials: there is no place in our department for racism, racist comments, or actions. Over the coming year, there are plans to add a new committee website, where the AEDC will post news of events and activities, disseminate information on departmental antiracism initiatives to faculty and students, and publicly describe the committee’s mission. This webpage will also serve as a portal by which faculty can convey interest in joining the committee, as well as a gateway to the main UD Anti Racism Initiative (henceforth UDARI) pages. Several AEDC members also serve on UDARI subcommittees, providing a good conduit for ideas and information to and from the larger UD community. The committee has also discussed faculty representation on the various committees of DLLC as an important part of the work towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The AEDC has also been working with the Department to expand the languages taught on campus. The DLLC plans to

launch American Sign Language (ASL) in the coming academic year; further suggestions have included Hindi, Urdu, Swahili and other African languages. In 2019, the DLLC began offering Korean as a pilot program; its popularity led to the formal adoption of a distinct subject code ‘KORE’. This means that students will be able to take the Three Languages Major in three Asian languages right here on campus, which has not been possible before. The Chinese and Japanese Studies sections have also recently added Honors programs, bringing them in line with the European language programs for which this is already established. The committee is also excited to be working with colleagues in African Studies to survey interest levels in Swahili, which could then be taught using supplementary funding. It is an exciting time in the department as interest grows in a wide range of languages from around the world!

As part of this broader effort to diversify the curriculum, DLLC faculty have also worked actively in collaboration with Center for Global and Area Studies programs to expand our course offerings on literature and culture this year, with a focus on Asia. Assistant Professor of World Music Sunmin Yoon, Associate Professor of Chinese Haihong Yang and Professor of Japanese and Game Studies Rachael Hutchinson worked on syllabi for Korean culture courses, taught under the experimental subject code ASIA367. Dr. Hutchinson taught ‘Asia Past and Present: Korea’ in Fall 2020, and Dr. Yoon will teach ‘K-Pop, K-Wave and Global Asia’ in Fall 2021. This expansion of courses on Korea in the Asian context may also be seen as a response to current anti-Asian hate in America, combating racism with knowledge and a rich learning experience. The Fall 2020 course was enlivened with guest lectures from other departments on campus: Professor of Political Science and International Relations Alice Ba spoke about foreign relations between North and South Korea, Director of the Center for Historic Architecture & Design and Professor of Art History and Asian Studies Chandra Reedy lectured on Korean art, Assistant Professor of

World Music Sunmin Yoon spoke about traditional Korean performance and the origins of K-pop, and Associate Professor of History Yuanchong Wang gave an overview of Korean history through time, including relations with China and Korea. In this way faculty connections were strengthened while providing an interdisciplinary view of the subject.

To disseminate committee activities more broadly and involve the wider DLLC faculty, the AEDC has been invited to give reports at Departmental faculty meetings, following reports by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Graduate Studies Committee. The opportunity to speak directly to the faculty community is very much appreciated, as it has provided a means of promoting the panel discussions as well as taking questions and receiving feedback on our activities. The committee also distributed an overview and summary of its meeting minutes in the spring, so faculty could get a good idea of what its goals are.

Drs. Hutchinson and Sankara would like to say a huge thank you to every member of the AEDC, for meeting via the Zoom platform for two and three hours at a time, in a context of intense political and racial turmoil last summer, and continuing through personal and professional difficulties as we all coped as best we could during the COVID pandemic. They recognize that working on antiracism efforts is difficult and demanding, and it takes a toll on those involved. If you see any of the committee members in the halls, please give them a word of encouragement - it invigorates the committee’s work and gives them the energy to keep going!

Moving forward into the new academic year, AEDC leadership will rotate to two new co-chairs, Dr. Gladys Ibarregui and Dr. Aurelia Rio for the Fall 2021 semester. Looking to Spring 2022, these positions will be filled by Dr. Meghan McInnis-Domínguez and Ms. Fatima Haq. This rotation will allow a greater number of faculty to contribute to the leadership of the AEDC committee, while spreading the burden of work among many. Drs. Ibarregui and Rio are already planning

material for the new webpage, as well as a Fall pedagogy panel highlighting student work. It is our sincere hope that the AEDC will provide a resource for all faculty and students in the Department and beyond to work actively together for a more socially just environment for teaching and learning. All are welcome to AEDC events, and we hope to see you in person in the coming year!

### DECOLONIZING THE DLLC CURRICULUM

One of the most interesting and impactful events the committee organized over the past year was a series of pedagogical panels, titled ‘Decolonizing the Curriculum in the DLLC’. These panels featured faculty from a range of languages and areas of expertise. The first featured AEDC committee members Associate Professor of Spanish Meghan McInnis-Domínguez and Senior Instructor of French Flora Poindexter, as well as Assistant Professors of Classics Marcaline Boyd and Tyson Sukava. Dr. McInnis-Domínguez shared in-class texts used for translation and essay work, which express an intersectional perspective on history and culture. In addition to canonical texts, Dr. McInnis-Domínguez includes texts by authors who were traditionally marginalized, especially due to race, class, or gender. Students read and experience the writing of women not only in terms of gender but also class, as the social station of the writer comes through the text in many different ways. An example activity that Dr. McInnis-Domínguez outlined was the reading of



Roman ruins in El Jem, Mahdia, Tunisia

a poem written by an formerly enslaved Afro-Cuban poet, Plácido, and class discussion of what the poem’s imagery tells us about the experiences of people who were exploited in this way.

Ms. Poindexter offered ways to supplement the limited perspective of the French language textbooks, which often show only white people in images illustrating various activities. Through the use of slides showing a wide range of people enjoying the activities, students can relate the activities to themselves and see that ‘French speakers’ are a diverse group indeed. Dr. Boyd teaches classes on Ancient Greek and Roman culture and

mythology, deconstructing the image of the ‘Greek Empire’ and ‘Roman Empire’ by showing these are very broad in definition, encompassing not only Greece, Italy and places in modern Europe but also what we now think of as North Africa, Turkey and the Middle East.

Dr. Sukava similarly deconstructs myths of white supremacy based on classical ideologies of ‘Western civilization,’ breaking down perceived correlations between ‘whiteness’ and the ancient world. The panel took place via Zoom, and presentations were followed by lively discussions among the presenters and attendees.



Afro-Cuban poet, Plácido



Painting representing burakumin among other higher-status classes in Japan

The second panel featured Associate Professor of Chinese Jianguo Chen and Professor of Japanese and Game Studies Rachael Hutchinson as well as Associate Professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies Phillip Penix-Tadsen, Assistant Professor of Spanish, Portuguese, and Linguistics Meghan Dabkowski



and Assistant Professor of Spanish Steven Alcorn. Dr. Chen first defined 'decolonizing the curriculum' in terms of recognizing ways of knowing that do not depend on Western intellectual hegemony. Martin Heidegger's interest in Chinese Taoism was used as an example to show the global, interconnected nature of metaphysics and philosophy. The current effects of anti-Chinese imagery in American public discourse were also addressed. Dr. Hutchinson spoke about how her syllabus in Japanese literature has changed over time, and the logistics of changing the readings to show a greater diversity of experience in contemporary Japan. Students of color are particularly interested in the experience of minority populations in Japan, particularly stories about *zainichi* Korean people and *buraku* communities, who face considerable discrimination.



*Scene depicting human sacrifice before Tohil, a Mayan god, from the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the Maya K'iche' people.*

Dr. Penix-Tadsen similarly discussed how he has changed the readings in his courses over time, forgoing the misogynist works of predominantly white male cis-gendered authors in favor of emphasizing the voices of women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized groups, highlighting their experiences in the texts and class materials.

Drs. Alcorn and Dabkowski then discussed indigenous languages that students may encounter on study abroad in South America, which leads to questions of languages that have been constructed as 'minority' or 'majority' languages over time in their own sociocultural context.



*Mural including a representation of Comandanta Ramona, an important figure in the Zapatista movement for indigenous rights in Mexico*

This panel also took place via Zoom, with a brief question and answer period. Both panels are available at the following links for those interested in hearing the talks: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

All of these talks discussed the ways in which discourses are constructed, and a theme that emerged from the ensuing conversations was that just as they are constructed, problematic discourses can thus be dismantled, and new inclusive and affirming discourses can be built to take their place. These two panels are

the start of what is already a fruitful discussion among DLLC faculty as to how best to serve our students by actively incorporating anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom. The panels discussed teaching in a wide range of courses, from 100-level to 400-level language instruction, to classes on literature and culture taught in English as well as in the target languages, to study abroad experiences. In all our classes we can discuss real-world issues of race, power, colonialism, representation, and identity. We can talk about immigration, diaspora, multiethnic communities, and how language changes over time and in different regions. This effort will improve critical thinking for our students at all levels, meeting the mission of the DLLC, CAS and UD as a whole. Our students can truly be 'global citizens' according to UD and DLLC mission statements. In the coming year, this series will include more faculty perspectives as well as student portfolios, showing the rich variety of study that comes under the rubric 'languages, literatures and cultures.'



*Painting representing Quechua people and dolls engaged in festivities / Image by Carlos Chirinos from Pixabay*

# Other Antiracism, Equity, and Diversity Efforts in the DLLC



LASER co-president Lucia Pastor



LASER co-president Amanda Reed

## LASER DELAWARE

Assistant Professor of Spanish, Portuguese, and Linguistics Dr. Meghan Dabkowski and Honors student Amanda Reed have also been hard at work on an exciting new initiative focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion: [LASER at UD](#). LASER stands for Latinx Space for Enrichment and Research, and is a program connecting area Latinx high school students to UD undergraduate mentors for support throughout high school and especially throughout the college exploration and application processes. In addition to weekly mentoring sessions on site at each school, LASER plans to bring participating high school students to campus next spring for the first of their “Community Days”, which will introduce students to UD with campus tours, guest speakers and more, and help them to envision a future at UD.

Amanda, a double major in English and Spanish, with minors in Race, Culture, and Equity in Education and Comparative Literature, did research as part of the Community Engagement Summer Scholars program, finding that the Latinx community is underrepresented in higher education and that Latinx families often face unique challenges when it comes to preparing for, applying to, and financing college. Dr. Dabkowski had previously worked with the founding chapter of LASER at The Ohio State University,

which was established to help address these challenges, so she and Amanda have been working together to build LASER at UD. Amanda is co-president of the organization and Dr. Dabkowski is faculty advisor.

Nursing major, Spanish for Healthcare minor, and co-president of LASER at UD Lucia Pastor sees the value in this type of program. As she thinks back on her time in high school, Lucia says “I wish that I had had the opportunity to participate in a program like this. Although I was ultimately successful in my application to UD, there were a lot of difficulties throughout the process, and these students will benefit so much by having someone to help them and their families figure it all out. I’m really excited to be a part of that process.” Lucia looks forward to working with these students, as we collectively strive toward building a larger Latinx community at UD.

Initially LASER will focus on the connection between UD undergraduates and high school students in grades 9-12, but the longer-term goal is to expand the program to create a mentoring chain, from faculty to graduate students, to undergraduates, to high school students to middle school and beyond. The LASER leadership team welcomes input and participation from all UD faculty, alumni, students, staff, and any interested community members, in particular those that identify as Hispanic and/or Latino/a/x.

## BLM ITALY

Italian Studies conferences and publications often focus on questions of identity. In recent years, these questions have opened up in ways that interrogate the very questions themselves: which Italians? Which Italian? Assistant Professor of Italian Dr. Lillyrose Veneziano Broccia has participated in some of these initiatives and hopes that the field continues to move toward less exclusive work, affirming that “listening to and really hearing Italian voices that have been excluded or marginalized is the way forward.”



Italian Studies organizations and departments have been offering local, national and international professional development opportunities focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racist pedagogical practices. Dr. Veneziano Broccia presented on and attended talks on diversity in the Italian language and curriculum, the history of Italian racism, and Black Italians and digital culture at various forums this past year.” She is happy to share with the DLLC faculty and alumni upcoming professional development opportunities organized collaboratively by the American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI) Keystone chapter (of which she is currently co-president), *La Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel Mondo*, The America-Italy Society of Philadelphia, Filitalia, and the Consulate General of Philadelphia:

“Quale Italiano?”/ “Which Italian?”  
October 23, 2021 and March 25, 2022

Image by mjimages from Pixabay

# student reflection

In his Spanish Advanced Composition and Grammar II course, Associate Professor of Spanish Dr. Hans-Jörg Busch gave an assignment in which students were to write an editorial for a student newspaper on the topic of discrimination, racism and bias. Three Languages and Linguistics double major Louie Casula wrote the following thoughtful and relevant piece that shows how studying languages and interacting with other cultures can bring insight and nuance to the way we experience the world.

## *Ojos que no ven*

*Yo sería mentiroso si dijera que no juzgo a nadie. Es una parte de ser humano, una ventaja biológica sobre las otras criaturas. Es cómo sabemos si estamos a salvo o en peligro, si podemos confiar en alguien, si nos atraemos el uno al otro. De hecho, ¡nos encanta juzgar a la gente! Es por eso que los reality shows y las aplicaciones de citas son muy populares. Sin embargo, debe haber una diferencia entre el juicio y la discriminación.*

*Uno de mis profesores japoneses me contó una historia de lo que vio en Japón. En su mayor parte Japón es homogéneo y por eso, los ciudadanos no ven muchas personas diversas y se conmocionan cuando las ven. Un día, mientras caminaba por Tokio, vio una madre cargando a su hija en el hombro y justo detrás de ellas había una mujer negra con un afro. Porque la niña no había visto a una persona con piel y pelo diferente, se volvió muy curiosa. “ふわふわ!” dijo la niña, que se traduce con “esponjoso” y la mujer simplemente se rio y le dejó tocar su pelo.*

*Compare esa historia con la de mi amigo que trabajaba en un restaurante chino. A él le encantaba todo de su trabajo; de los clientes y los compañeros a la comida y la cultura. Después de trabajar allí por algunos años, su jefe se jubiló y fue reemplazado con un nuevo jefe. Dos meses pasaron y cuando se preparaban para cerrar el restaurante una noche, el jefe mencionó que sus empleados chinos trabajaban más y mejor que los demás. Insultado, mi amigo empezó a discutir con el jefe, y el próximo día fue despedido.*

*En estas historias, los que fueron juzgados definitivamente se sentían incómodos (de diferentes maneras), ¿pero por qué una es aceptable y la otra no? La culpable en la primera historia obviamente era inocente, no solo gracias a su edad, sino porque era ignorante y no tenía ninguna experiencia con otras razas. El culpable en la segunda historia definitivamente actuó con intención discriminatoria, y afectó el sustento de mi amigo. Para responder a la pregunta de antes, la ignorancia tiene ojos que no ven y la discriminación tiene un corazón que no siente.*

## **Eyes that do not see**

I would be a liar if I said that I don't judge anybody. It's a part of being human, a biological advantage over the other creatures. It's how we know if we are safe or in danger, if we can trust in someone, if we are attracted to one another. In fact, we love judging people! That's why reality tv shows and dating apps are so popular. However, there must be a difference between judgement and discrimination.

One of my Japanese professors told me a story about what they saw in Japan. For the most part Japan is homogeneous and as such, the citizens don't see many people of diverse backgrounds and are surprised to see them. One day, while walking around Tokyo, they saw a mother carrying her daughter on her shoulder and just behind them was a black woman with an afro. Because the girl hadn't seen a person with different skin and hair than hers, she became very curious. “ふわふわ!” said the girl, which translates to “fluffy” and the woman simply laughed and let her touch her hair.

Compare this story with that of my friend that worked at a Chinese restaurant. My friend loved everything about his job; from the customers and coworkers to the food and the culture. After having worked there for a few years, eventually his boss retired and was soon replaced with a new one. Two months passed and when they were getting ready to close the restaurant one night, the boss mentioned that his Chinese employees worked harder and better than the rest. Insulted, my friend got into an argument with the boss, and was fired the next day.

In these stories, those that were judged definitely felt uncomfortable (in different ways, granted), but why is one instance acceptable and the other isn't? The culprit of the first story was obviously innocent, not just thanks to her age, but rather because she was ignorant and had no experience with other races. The culprit of the second story definitely acted with discriminative intent, which affected the livelihood of my friend. To respond to the question from before, ignorance has eyes that don't see while discrimination has a heart that doesn't feel.

*Eye by regara from the Noun Project  
Locked heart by Gregor Cresnar from the Noun Project*

# on study



*Statue of Queen Isabel with Christopher Columbus in the Plaza de Isabel la Católica, which Helena passed each day walking to and from class in Granada*

**HELENA RHEIN**, BA Music and Spanish  
2021, MALLC Spanish candidate

When it was confirmed that I was going to be studying abroad in Granada, Spain for June 2019, I was ecstatic. It was my first time traveling alone -- without my family -- and only my second time out of the country ever. But even stranger, I was going to be in a place that spoke Spanish 24/7... and that intimidated me. I had only been studying Spanish seriously for about a year, and I had had conversations in Spanish, but nothing to this scale. I couldn't even watch a movie without subtitles. There are no subtitles in real-life Spain. Moreover, I was so conscious of the way that I spoke because I had been bullied for it in the past and that had turned into a fear of having broken Spanish. I wanted to be taken seriously -- and even though I expected to have fun, I still prepared myself for whatever was about to come my way.

Of course, it wasn't as bad as I had anticipated, but I was the only one to feel this way. A week or so into the program, I had met up with a few of my fellow UD classmates at a café and they were all expressing their frustration. They came to Spain feeling confident in their Spanish fluency, yet a lot got past them. They found themselves feeling lost if their host parents asked them questions. I felt the complete opposite. As I said, I had prepared myself for a painful reality check, but from the moment I got off the plane, I was not only surviving, but thriving. I could ask people for directions; people asked me for directions (and then I could respond, saying I didn't know my way around well); my host parents would tell us stories about their families and friends and I got most, if not the

# abroad



*Helena Rhein (BA Music and Spanish 2021, MALLC Spanish candidate) and friend Katie Cornet in Granada, Spain*

entire story, and when we had movie nights I got through the entire movie without needing breaks like I did prior. If anything, I had it in my head that I didn't really know Spanish and this trip convinced me that I, truly, was just being too hard on myself.

Although I took actual academic classes in Spain, I feel like I learned the most through the time spent with my host family -- both about culture and language. I spent as much time as I could with them. While my American roommate decided to spend her time with our classmates, I'd accompany the family for walks around the town or to visit their relatives, and those are where my fondest memories of Spain are from. There were numerous times

where we met with their families over lunch, and they would ask me about my lives, hobbies, and interests, and I would ask them about theirs. I still distinctly remember the grandmother's reaction when she first heard me speak: she looked at me astonished and said to her daughter "this girl's Spanish is incredible". The grandmother's reaction perfectly encompassed how I always felt: speaking Spanish had felt like some sort of strange, fake reality from the beginning. Even though I learned the words and knew they were right, it still felt like I was speaking an alien, gibberish language that no one was going to understand, yet I was speaking it; I could be understood and could understand others. It was a pleasant

surprise for everyone. Moreover, it was so nice to see all the hard work I had put into my Spanish -- from the grammar to my accent -- pay off, right in front of my eyes.

When classes on campus started up again that fall, I didn't have room in my schedule for Spanish class and I missed it immensely. I was a vocal performance major at the time and at this point in my career I felt so unmotivated and dispassionate about my music classes. I kept pondering on my time in Spain; I missed it a lot. Not only did I miss the language, but I found myself more passionate about speaking Spanish with others and learning more about other cultures than I did learning about opera. A Spanish minor wasn't enough. In January 2020, I changed my major from music to Spanish and I hadn't had a single second thought or doubt since. Part of me felt at home in Spain, even if it's not my language or culture, and that sense of belonging has stuck with me throughout the entirety of this new major. In fact, I've recently decided to further my Spanish studies and will be starting my master's degree in language, literature, and culture at the University of Delaware come Fall 2021.

My time in Spain, albeit only a month, completely changed the trajectory of my life and career. It squashed many self-doubts -- doubts that any language-learner faces, and I hope that anyone -- either those studying abroad or learning a language for fun -- has a similar enlightening experience. The learning process is so gradual that we can't see how much we've grown. We're capable of more than we think.

# alumni news



*Brenda Savelski*

**BRENDA SAVELSKI** (BALLC Three Languages 2015)

Brenda writes: “My Three Languages degree from UD has enabled me to embark on an international career starting in Tokyo and now in London. I majored in French, Russian, and Japanese, choosing three very different languages to keep my options open to work across the public and private sectors. The opportunity to engage with such diverse cultures within one degree has been an invaluable experience that developed my critical thinking and provided me with career flexibility. After graduating, I taught English in Japan for the

Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education where I stayed for three years, improving my Japanese skills to the point where I was teaching English to our Japanese students and Japanese to our exchange students from Europe and Latin America. I then decided to continue my studies with a master’s in business management from the London School of Economics, where I put my language skills from UD to work on a thesis analyzing the marketing of bestselling novels in translation across multiple languages. After graduating, I moved into my current role as a financial products analyst at Bloomberg’s London office. As a member of the French desk at

the company’s European headquarters, I work with our French-speaking clients across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa on a daily basis. My role is to enable our clients to get the most out of their Bloomberg technology by troubleshooting their problems and training them on how to use our analytical functions. This means working with professionals ranging from commodities traders in Tunisia to portfolio managers in Luxembourg. Although my current role is primarily in French and English, all of my language skills are useful in this global setting. I am doing my best to maintain all my languages for whatever may come in the future!

# & updates



*Erin Fogarty*

**ERIN FOGARTY's** (BALLC AGRS 2020) revised thesis "Women as Murderers in Tacitus' Annales" will appear in the undergraduate Classics journal *Philomathes*. Erin is currently a UD graduate student in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, where her focus is historic landscape preservation.

**PATRICIA MACE** (BA 2014) studied Japanese, International relations and History at UD, then earned a MS in Global affairs at New York University. She is currently employed as Programs Manager at the Center for Conflict Resolution in New York City. Patricia is a conflict resolution professional committed to bringing everyone to the peacebuilding table. She is a passionate advocate for gender inclusion and disability accessibility.



*Patricia Mace*

Along with her major areas of study, **MARCHELLE MULLINGS** (BA International Business and Marketing 2012) completed a minor in Japanese and studied abroad in Kobe, Japan. She is currently employed full time at Syneos Health as a specialty Sales Representative. Marchelle has won national and regional awards for launching and promoting products in Neurology, Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Psychiatry, Pulmonology, and Women's Health.

**STARVONSKY GIBBS** (BA International Relations 2004) completed minors in Japanese and East Asian Studies. "Star" went on to an MS in International Relations at Troy University. He is currently a manager at the Hershey Company in Hershey, PA, specializing as

a supply chain professional. Star credits his academic background and eight years experience living, working and studying in East and Southeast Asia with helping to develop his leadership skills.



*Marchelle Mullings*



*Starvonsky Gibbs*

# faculty notes



*Dr. Persephone Braham*

## AWARDS AND GRANTS

**DR. PERSEPHONE BRAHAM**, Professor of Spanish, has received this year's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) award for [excellence in advisement](#).

**DR. JOAN BROWN**, Elias Ahuja Chair of Spanish, received "La orden de don Quijote" award from Sigma Delta Pi on May 1, 2021.. The highest honor conferred by Sigma Delta Pi, the Order of Don Quijote recognizes exceptional and meritorious service in the fields of Hispanic scholarship, the teaching of Spanish, and the promotion of good relations between English-speaking countries and those of Spanish speech.



*Dr. Joan Brown / The plaque presented by Sigma Delta Pi to Dr. Brown commemorating her induction to the Order of Don Quijote.*



*Dr. Jianguo Chen*

**DR. JIANGUO CHEN**, Associate Professor of Chinese, has received a federal grant from the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State, and American Councils for International Education to direct the 2021 National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) Summer Institute of Chinese Language and Culture. Additionally, Dr. Chen was recently appointed by Governor John Carney to serve on the Board of Directors for Delaware Humanities. Founded in 1973, Delaware Humanities is a Delaware's independent, non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Its mission is to strengthen our communities by encouraging all Delawareans to be inspired, informed, and engaged through exploring the diversity of the human experience.



*Dr. Rachael Hutchinson*

**DR. RACHAEL HUTCHINSON**, Professor of Japanese and Game Studies, was recognized with the UD Faculty Senate 2021 Mid-Career Faculty Excellence in Scholarship Award. This award highlights the University's commitment to excellence in research, scholarship and creative endeavors, and recognizes faculty who have made outstanding contributions to their scholarly field at the mid-career stage.



*Dr. Gladys Ilarregui*

Associate Professor of Spanish **DR. GLADYS ILARREGUI** was recently awarded the prestigious **Carmen Conde Women's Poetry Award** for her book *Manifiesto de ruinas y destellos*. Named for writer Carmen Conde Abellán, the first woman to be named an academic numerary of the Royal Spanish Academy, this award recognizes the achievements of women authors. The publishing company issuing the award, *Torreozas* will publish the work in its upcoming collection of women's poetry.





*Dr. Renee Dong*



*Dr. Rachael Hutchinson*



*Dr. Meredith Ray*

## PROMOTIONS

Several faculty members received well-deserved promotions this year. Congratulations to all!

**DR. RENEE DONG** was promoted to Associate Professor of Chinese and World Language Pedagogy.

**DR. RACHAEL HUTCHINSON** was promoted to Professor of Japanese and Game Studies.

**DR. MEREDITH RAY** was selected to be the Elias Ahuja Professor of Italian.

## NEW FACULTY

The DLLC was excited to welcome three new faculty members in Fall 2020: Dr. Steven Alcorn, Assistant Professor of Spanish, Dr. Holly Myers, Assistant Professor of Russian, and Dr. Lillyrose Veneziano Broccia, Assistant Professor of Italian. Each new faculty member introduces themselves below. Please say hello if you see them around campus!

### DR. STEVEN ALCORN

¡Hola a todos! My name is Dr. Steven Alcorn and in Fall 2020 I began teaching here at UD as Assistant Professor of Spanish. I currently teach courses at the 100, 200 and 300 levels. I received my Ph.D. in Iberian and Latin American



*Dr. Steven Alcorn*

Linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin in 2018. My personal and academic travels have taken me to such places as Argentina, Mexico, Brazil and Portugal, and I am incredibly grateful for this position which allows me to share my knowledge and passion for Hispanic language and culture with both students and colleagues.

Although my professional responsibilities here at UD are focused primarily on teaching, I am also engaged in research related to the acquisition of Spanish as a second language, specifically areas concerning pronunciation and speech perception. One of my current projects examines how well instructed learners of

Spanish can recognize different regional dialects of Spanish, what linguistic information they use to do this, and how their perception of linguistic features interacts with their attitudes and judgments of the speakers of different language varieties.

Although my wife and I moved to Delaware during a very strange time, we have been able to explore quite a bit of Newark and the surrounding area, and it has quickly begun to feel like home. As an avid cyclist I have been enjoying the numerous bike paths and trails, and as an amateur history buff I am constantly fascinated by the architectural and cultural treasures that the region has to offer.

### DR. HOLLY MYERS

Здравствуйте! Last fall I joined the DLLC faculty as an Assistant Professor of Russian. So far at UD, I've taught Russian courses at the 300 and 400 levels; I look forward to teaching 100- and 200-level courses, too, in the next couple years, so that I can learn more about how our students progress through the Russian program. I've also taken over as advisor of the Russian Club and soon will step into the role of undergraduate advisor for our Russian majors. I am so excited to be active and involved in all aspects of the Russian program, and in the DLLC, which has given me such a warm welcome—despite the social distancing!



*Dr. Holly Myers*

I was an English major at Amherst College when I was first exposed to Russian literature my junior year in a seminar called “Strange Russian Writers”—mere weeks later, I was in my professor’s office to start remapping my life so that I could study Russian language, literature, and culture. That summer before my senior year I did an intensive Russian language program; after I graduated, I moved to Moscow for a year to continue studying the language, while teaching English to support myself. Since then, I have lived in and traveled to lesser-known parts of Russia, as far north as Petrozavodsk, the Solovki Islands, and Murmansk (where the sun never fully sets in the summer!), and as far east as Vladivostok, on the coast of the Pacific Ocean, via the Trans-Siberian Railroad. I spent one summer volunteering to help build a hiking trail around Lake Baikal in Siberia, to promote eco-tourism as an alternative to Putin’s paper-processing plants. I’ve also spent a significant amount of time in Central Asia, the region of my secondary specialization; Russian still functions as a lingua franca in most of the cities, which present a fascinating mix of Russian, Soviet, and national(ist) cultures.

My primary research interests, however, are focused on Russian and Soviet narratives of trauma, such as war and the Gulag. My current book project, “Telling and Retelling a War Story: Svetlana

Alexievich and Alexander Prokhanov on the Soviet-Afghan War,” examines the fluid relationships between truths, authority, facts, and documents in the unusual hybrid literary forms that each writer has produced and then repeatedly revised, from the 1980s to the present day. Unlike the Russian Civil War or World War II, the Soviet-Afghan War did not gain a stable narrative in Russian culture. As a result, its literary representations—and interpretations of these representations—have been especially sensitive to evolving political realities and agendas. Located on opposite sides of the political spectrum, Alexievich and Prokhanov tell competing narratives of the so-called “forgotten war.” My second book project on documentary modes in post-WWII Soviet and Russian literature has grown out of my work on Soviet-Afghan War literature, which often relies on or incorporates some form of “document” to convey authenticity.

After I received my PhD in Slavic Languages at Columbia University, I taught as a Term Assistant Professor at Barnard College, before accepting my current position at UD. The transition from New York City to Delaware has been a happy one for me and my six-year-old son. We have relished having a yard (!), exploring the nearby White Clay Creek State Park, and discovering one after another amazing ice creamery in the region. We both look forward to meeting everyone in the department. Go Blue Hens! Вперед!

#### **DR. LILLYROSE VENEZIANO BROCCIA**

Ciao! I am Dr. Lillyrose Veneziano Broccia, Assistant Professor of Italian. Here at UD I have been teaching Beginning Italian I.

I was born and raised in a Sicilian-speaking home in Philadelphia. After attending Community College of Philadelphia, I graduated with my BA in Italian and French from Temple University. Then, at Middlebury College - in Vermont and Florence, Italy - I completed my MA in Italian. After teaching part-time in



*Dr. Lillyrose Veneziano Broccia*

Philadelphia, I moved to New York City – where I earned my PhD in Italian at Columbia University.

My work and research focus on Second Language Development and Language and Culture Pedagogy. I am committed to fostering collaborative and inclusive learning communities, inside and outside the classroom, in a way that empowers and uplifts learners. I have been teaching online since 2013 and have been happy to share my experience in virtual environments during this unpredictable and difficult time – encouraging comfortable remote classes that truly welcome meaningful engagement.

My love for Italian and pedagogy feel very much at home here at UD, where my role focuses on teaching. Even though our time together so far has only been virtual, it has been a joy getting to know students and colleagues – near and far.

I was supposed to attend UD out of high school, but my path took me in different directions for a while. Now, I am finally here – enjoying being a Blue Hen!

## FACULTY LECTURES, MEDIA APPEARANCES, AND ARTICLE PUBLICATIONS

Associate Professor of French **DR. ALI ALALOU** was interviewed in December 2020 on 2MTV, a Moroccan television channel, where he discussed the normalization of diplomatic relations between Israel and Morocco.

Assistant Professor of Classics **DR. MARCALINE BOYD** recently published the article, "Sleeping With The Tyrant: Thebe The Tyrannicide And The Death Of Alexander Of Pherae In Plutarch's *Pelopidas*" in *Histos* (2021). Dr. Boyd also presented a paper entitled "Plutarch's Protean Tyrant" at the International Plutarch Society's panel on "The Discourse of Leadership in the Greco-Roman World" in January 2021.

**DR. CRISTINA GUARDIOLA-GRIFFITHS**, Associate Professor of Spanish, presented in March 2021 at a virtual Mediterranean Studies symposium honoring Dr. Harriet Goldberg, organized by Villanova University, and co-sponsored by DLLC, among others. Dr. Guardiola-Griffiths discussed her research "On the Uses of Breastmilk, Parody in the Arcipreste de Talavera."

In December 2020, Professor of Japanese and Game Studies **DR. RACHAEL HUTCHINSON** gave a talk for the SOAS University of London Japanese Seminar Series, titled "Japanese Culture Through Videogames: Games as Texts and Discursive Practice." The talk focused on the cultural content of globally popular games such as *SoulCalibur*, *Final Fantasy* and *Metal Gear Solid*, providing evidence that video games are not only texts with aesthetic value but may also be read as part of contemporary discourse, while gameplay itself can be understood as discursive practice. The talk is archived on the [SOAS website](#) and on YouTube. Dr. Hutchinson also presented her research at a Japanese film symposium hosted by Nagoya University, Japan, held March 5-7, 2021. The symposium collected 40

Japanese film scholars and celebrated the publication of *The Japanese Cinema Book* and the *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Cinema*. Dr. Hutchinson presented her research on 'Censorship as Education: Film Violence and Ideology.'

During the 2019-2020 academic year, Associate Professor of Spanish **DR. GLADYS ILARREGUI** presented her work at several international conferences. Along with colleagues from Humboldt State University, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla and El Colegio de México, Dr. Ilarregui co-organized the *3rd Symposium of Books, Travels and Travelers: Count Vlad Tepes Dracula and the Discourse of Blood* at Lucian Blaga University, in Sibiu, Romania in June 2019, where she also presented poetry from women victims of torture in Latin America. In July 2019, she also presented her paper on Gelman's poetry on mothers, dictatorship and survival at the Center for Advanced Academic Studies at the University of Zagreb. In August of 2019, Dr. Ilarregui was invited to read her poetic work as part of the "Jornadas de Investigación. Circuitos transatlánticos de la poesía," organized by the Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA), Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Buenos Aires.

**DR. MARGARET LAIRD**, Associate Professor of Latin and Classics, has been appointed Managing Editor for Academic Publications of the American Academy in Rome, a leading overseas center for independent studies and advanced research in the fine arts and humanities. Among Dr. Laird's responsibilities will be editing the *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, a peer-reviewed journal published since 1915 that includes articles on topics related to Roman archaeology and topography, ancient and modern Italian history, Latin literature, and Italian art and architectural history.

In Summer 2020, Associate Professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies Dr. Phillip Penix-Tadsen published the article "*Pioneras: Three Generations*

of Women Developing Games in the Southern Cone" in the journal *Feminist Media Histories*. This oral and written history examines three generations of pioneering women game developers from Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile—the South American region known as the Southern Cone—, offering insight on female leadership over three generations of precipitous growth in regional game development. The article can be accessed [here](#) for free. Dr. Penix-Tadsen was also interviewed by Vice Latin America about his area of expertise—video games and Latin American culture—for a web video that has more than half a million views! The video—in Spanish only—can be seen [here](#). (Full disclosure: this video is a paid advertisement for a video game called *Valorant*, but Dr. Penix-Tadsen was not paid and his interview talks about his own research, not the game being advertised.)

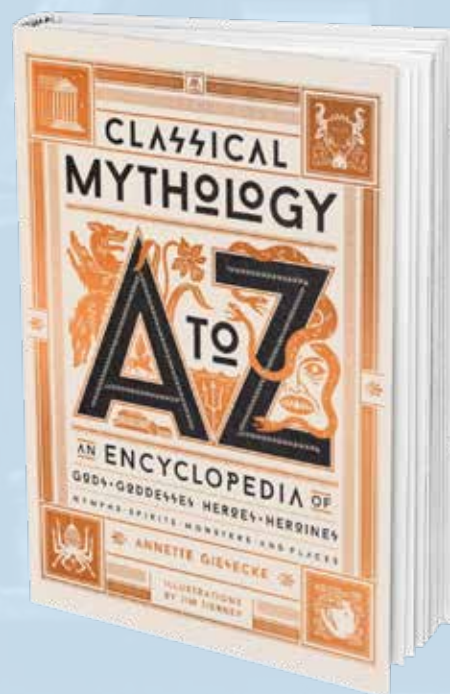
**DR. MEREDITH K. RAY**, Elias Ahuja Professor of Italian and Interim Department Chair, was an invited speaker at the University of California, Berkeley's conference on "Women and Science in Early Modern Europe" in November 2020. She published several articles, including: "East of Italy: Women and Alchemy at the 'Peripheries' of Early Modern Europe," in *Early Modern Women Journal* (2020); "Renaissance of Women: New Directions in North American Scholarship on Early Modern Italian Literature," in *Bruniana & Campanelliana* (2020); and "Isabella Andreini: Cittadina del Mondo," in *LIA* (2021).

**DR. ALEXANDER SELIMOV**, Professor of Spanish, read one of his poems in the XV international poetry festival *Una Voz por la Paz, Concordia y Armonía (One Voice for Peace, Concord, and Harmony)*, presented by Acción Colombia, the Philadelphia Public Library, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Temple University, and the Penn Museum. Dr. Selimov also recently had two poems published in the #66 Spring Volume of [Dreamstreets Poetry Review](#).

# books published



**DR. JOAN L. BROWN's** new book with Bucknell University Press, *Calila: The Later Novels of Carmen Martín Gaité*, explores the last six novels by Spain's most honored contemporary woman writer. Its scholarship is enriched by the voice of Calila herself—as Brown called Martín Gaité, who was a dear friend—as they conversed and exchanged letters during the composition of the novels. The book opens with an introduction to Martín Gaité's life and literature and ends with a consideration of her legacy. Each central chapter analyzes a later novel in its historical, biographical, and critical contexts. From the young adult fantasy *Caperucita en Manhattan* (Red Riding Hood in Manhattan) to the post-Transition epistolary masterpiece *Nubosidad variable* (Variable Cloud), the Transition-era saga *La Reina de las Nieves* (The Farewell Angel), the Proustian reminiscence *Lo raro es vivir* (Living's the Strange Thing), the narrative tapestry *Irse de casa* (Leaving Home), and the memoir of family secrets *Los parentescos* (Family Relations), these fascinating novels evoke themes that resonate today.



*Classical Mythology A-to-Z* is a comprehensive and engrossing guide to Greek and Roman mythology. Written by **DR. ANNETTE GIESECKE**, Elias Ahuja Professor of Classics, this brilliant reference offers clear explanations of every character and locale, and captures the essence of these timeless tales. From the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus and the heroes of the Trojan War to the nymphs, monsters, and other mythical creatures that populate these ancient stories, Giesecke recounts, with clarity and energy, the details of more than 700 characters and places. Each definition includes cross-references to related characters, locations, and myths, as well as their equivalent in Roman mythology and cult. An encyclopedic A-to-Z guide, this beautifully illustrated volume offers hundreds of rich, fascinating definitions of 700 major and minor characters, creatures, and places of classical mythology. In addition to being an important standalone work, *Classical Mythology A-to-Z* is also written, designed, and illustrated to serve as an essential companion to the bestselling illustrated 75th-anniversary edition of *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton, including 10 full-color plates and 2-color illustrations throughout by artist Jim Tierney.

# by faculty

## IN 2020 – 2021



In 2020, Associate Professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies **PHILLIP PENIX-TADSEN** co-authored *Videogames—More than Just a Game: The Unknown Successes of Latin American and Caribbean Studios*, a report on the regional game industry sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank and featuring a bevy of data and more than 50 studios and 350 video games from Latin America. The [report](#) is available to download for free in English and Spanish. In *Video Games: More than Just a Game*, the reader will get to know 50 Latin American and Caribbean studios, their trends, and their successes with over 350 video games. This report sheds light on the industry's potential as a business, the new role of esports, the impact of videogames on women and on the skills for the future, and details funding schemes, the role of governments in making their industries known on the international market, and the importance of forums for exchanging knowledge. The video games industry has not only succeeded in incorporating cutting-edge technology into the entertainment sector but also into other more traditional sectors such as education and health. Video games are here to stay.



Elias Ahuja Professor of Italian and Interim Department Chair **MEREDITH K. RAY**, in collaboration with Dr. Lynn Lara Westwater of The George Washington University, has published a new edition and translation of Arcangela Tarabotti's *Convent Paradise*. The radical Venetian writer Arcangela Tarabotti (1604–1652), compelled against her will to become a nun, is well known for her scathing attacks on patriarchal institutions for forcing women into convents. *Convent Paradise* (1643), Tarabotti's first published work, instead invites the reader into the cloister to experience not only the trials of enclosure, but also its spiritual joys. In stark contrast to her other works, *Convent Paradise* aims to celebrate the religious culture that colored every aspect of Tarabotti's experience as a seventeenth-century Venetian and a nun. At the same time, this nuanced exploration of monastic life conveys a markedly feminist spirituality. Tarabotti's meditative portrait of the convent enriches our understanding of her own life and writing, while also providing a window into a spiritual destiny shared by thousands of early modern women.

# student awards

## ANCIENT GREEK AND ROMAN STUDIES PROGRAM AWARDS

**BRIDGETTE KEGELMAN** (BA Geography, BALLC Ancient Greek and Roman Studies 2021) was awarded the Richards Prize for Excellence in the study of Greek, Latin, and Ancient Greek and Roman civilization and culture.

## FRENCH PROGRAM AWARDS

Three students received the Theodore E. D. Braun French Undergraduate Award: **HAYLEY WHITING** (BA English Education and BALLC French 2021), **SONORA RIVERA-HEINZ** (BA Linguistics and BALLC Three Languages 2021), and **NICK GUGERTY** (BALLC Three Languages 2021).

A letter of commendation for excellence in teaching was awarded to **DIANA DYVNA** (MALLC French candidate) for exceptional graduate student teaching in French.

## GERMAN PROGRAM AWARDS

**JIM ERVIN** (Honors BS Chemical Engineering 2021) is the winner of the Sepp Hilsenrad Memorial Award for excellence in German courses.

**SHANNON PFEIFFER** (Biological Sciences major, German minor) is the winner of the Marion Wiley Memorial Award for excellence in German courses by a non-major.

## DELTA PHI ALPHA

**MICHAEL KING** (Computer Science Major), **CAROLYN ANDERSON** (Wildlife Ecology Conservation Major, Global Studies with Language Minor), and **DELANEY SULLIVAN** (Biological Science Major) were awarded the Sister Cities of Wilmington language awards for top students in German 105, 106, and 107.

## ITALIAN PROGRAM AWARDS

The prestigious Dr. Alfred H. Pagano Memorial Plaque from the Italo-Americans United Association was awarded to **LUCIANA VERNOLA** (BA

Three Languages 2021, MALLC Italian candidate). Luciana is an exemplary student who began the Italian MA program here at UD in the fall.

**LAURA SANDU** (BAFLP Italian Education 2021) has been awarded the Italian Teaching Excellence Award, for her distinction in academic work and student teaching.

**NICK GUGERTY** (BALLC Three Languages 2021) has been awarded the Eugenia Slavov Award, given to a student who has excelled in more than one language.

The Italian Faculty Award of Excellence was awarded to **JENNIFER BACKELMAN** (Psychology Major, Italian Minor).

## JAPANESE PROGRAM AWARDS

The recipient of The Dr. Sayo Yotsukura Memorial Prize for Excellence in Japanese Studies Major is **PETER LAM** (BALLC Japanese 2021). Peter is also one of seven graduating seniors inducted into the Japanese National Honor Society this year. The others are: **RYAN DOYLE** (Honors BA Music, Spanish/Asian Studies Minors), **ABBY KETTERLING** (BS Biological Sciences 2021), **MARINA MAO** (2021), **GAVIN REYNOLDS** (BALLC Three Languages 2021), **LALER SMITH-JOHNSON** (BALLC Japanese Studies 2021), and **ZANE ZALOGA** (BALLC Japanese Studies, BALLC Asian Studies).

## RUSSIAN PROGRAM AWARDS

The Eugenia Slavov Memorial award for excellence in Russian was awarded to graduating senior Russian minor **JACOB EWING** (BA International Relations 2021). Jacob also received an ACTR (American Council of Teachers of Russian) 2021 Post-Secondary Student Laureate Award for his commitment and active dedication to his Russian studies.

**BETHANY CHRISTIE** (Three Languages Major) has been awarded a highly sought-after Boren Scholarship! Bethany will receive full funding to spend an

academic year in Kyrgyzstan studying the Russian and Kyrgyz languages. This is a great accomplishment, and we offer our heartfelt congratulations. Unfortunately, COVID has affected those plans for this fall, but Bethany still hopes to study in Kyrgyzstan in spring 2022.



## NATIONAL POST-SECONDARY RUSSIAN ESSAY CONTEST

In Spring 2021, for the first time in DLLC history, our Russian students entered the highly-competitive National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest, competing against other Russian students in colleges and universities across the entire country.

Out of the nine students who participated this year, three students were awarded prizes: **RACHEL KODYSH** won a Silver Medal; **BETHANY CHRISTIE** won a Bronze Medal; and **NADYA ELLERHORST** earned an Honorable Mention.

The National Post-Secondary Russian Essay Contest, established in 1999 by the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR), has become the signature Russian language contest for post-secondary students across the United States. Every spring, students around the country have one hour to write an essay without any dictionaries or other aid, on a topic provided only at the start of the contest. All essays are then evaluated anonymously by judges in Moscow, according to three criteria: content (the ability to express ideas in Russian and communicate information about the topic); length, lexicon, syntax, structure (grammatical and orthographic accuracy); and, finally, originality or creativity. Thus, essays are evaluated on the quality of the student's expression and the depth and breadth of what he or she is trying to



*Rachel Kodysh:  
freshman; Public  
Policy major*



*Bethany Christie:  
junior; Three Language  
major; she studies  
Russian for the access it  
gives her to a big new  
part of the world.*



*Nadya Ellerborst:  
freshman; Russian and  
International Relations  
majors; interested in  
pursuing a career in  
U.S.-Russia relations.*

communicate, not solely on the grammar. Students compete against other students in the same category (i.e., non-native, heritage, or native speaker of Russian or other Slavic language) and the same level (i.e., number of formal contact hours in Russian language instruction). The essay topic this year was "my favorite place." In her essay, Nadya discussed the art museum in her hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio; she has been going there since she was a child, but she writes, "I still manage to find something new every time I visit." Bethany wrote that her favorite place was not a tangible location: "it's rather when I am able to see the fruit of my world language studies. I described a touching friendship I made with a customer at my work whose first language is Russian, and I talked about learning to speak with my grandmother in German, her native language, and developing a deeper connection with our family history in this way. These small moments in my life are what create my favorite place." Rachel describes her deep connection to Russian language and culture: "I have always loved the Russian language; it is my home. It followed me in colourful fantasy stories that my mother read to me as I fell asleep each night. It danced with me in the forest as I caught frogs in summer's heat. I hold it dear to me and I love it so much. I am so

grateful to still be able to read and write, collect all of the beauty this language has to offer, and have an alternate safe haven for my thoughts."

This year's contest winners encourage more DLLC students to participate in the NPS Russian Essay Contest next year. Nadya, who in past years had participated in the high school version of this contest, describes it as "a very fun experience in that you have the opportunity to really express yourself while utilizing foreign language skills." Bethany adds that "more Russian students should consider taking this opportunity, no matter their language ability!"

We congratulate this year's three contest winners! And we look forward to more to come, as the NPSREC becomes an annual tradition in the DLLC Russian Program.

## SPANISH PROGRAM AWARDS

### UNDERGRADUATE

The Sigma Delta Pi Book Prize for the new initiate to the honor society with the highest cumulative GPA was awarded to **ALISON LOBO** (BALLC Spanish 2021).

**AMANDA REED** (Honors English and Spanish Majors, Comparative Literature and Race, Culture & Equity in Education Minors) received the "Outstanding Student in Hispanic Literary Survey Courses" award for her paper "Reconocer el pasado, hacer bien en el presente, y tener esperanza para el futuro: Las lecciones de los personajes que no aparecen en *El tragaluz*."

**JENNA WHALEN** (BA Pre-Veterinary Medicine 2021) was awarded the "Best Essay in Upper-division Hispanic Literature and Culture Courses" award for "Post mortem y La Llorona: una fotograma vale mil palabras."

**AUBREY MCGOVERN** (Spanish Major, Medical Diagnostics Minor) was the recipient of the **JANET STUDY ABROAD MURDOCK AWARD** for the Granada, Spain program.

**PAIGE RUBAKH** (BALLC Spanish 2021, MALLC Spanish Pedagogy candidate) was not only awarded the DLLC's **SPANISH EDUCATION AWARD**, for the student whose outstanding scholarship and active participation in educationally-



*Paige Rubakh*

related activities recognizes their exceptional future promise in the field of education, but was also honored with the **COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES OUTSTANDING TEACHER IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AWARD**, which recognized exceptional undergraduate educators.

### GRADUATE

**RYAN VANSANT** (BALLC Spanish 2019, MALLC Spanish Candidate) earned the "Best Graduate Student Essay in Spanish" for his essay "Visiones madrileñas: El encanto de una Madrid soñadora en *El cuarto de atrás* y de la generación del medio siglo."

Both **MARIA DA GRAÇA TITO E LUCENA** (BA Honors International Relations, BALLC Spanish 2019, MALLC Spanish 2021) and **STEPHEN SPRAGALE** (MALLC Spanish 2021) were presented with the **OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD** in recognition of their performance in the MA program.

Letters of commendation for excellence in teaching were awarded to **MARIA DA GRAÇA TITO E LUCENA** and **ESTEFANIA VILLOBOS** (BAFLP Spanish Education, MAFLP Spanish Language Pedagogy 2021) for exceptional graduate student teaching in Spanish.

# events

In spite of gathering restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the DLLC was successful in holding many interesting and informative virtual events throughout the 2020-2021 academic year.

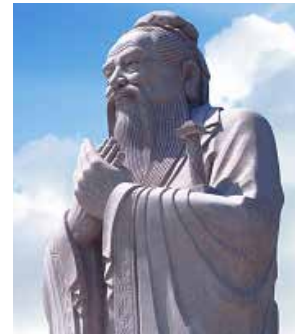
Within the department, the DLLC's Faculty Research and Pedagogy Workshop Series were a great way for faculty to convene virtually, share ideas, and maintain a sense of community and connection while we could not be together in person.



**El arcipreste de talavera que habla de los vicios de las malas mugeres e de las complaciones de los omnes.**

Cover image of 1500 publication of the *Corbacho*, also known as *Reprobación del amor mundano o Arcipreste de Talavera*

In September 2020, Associate Professor of Spanish Dr. Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths presented her research entitled "Medieval misogyny egg-splained: female vice in the *Corbacho*," which includes



Images of philosophers Lao Zi, Heidegger, and Confucius

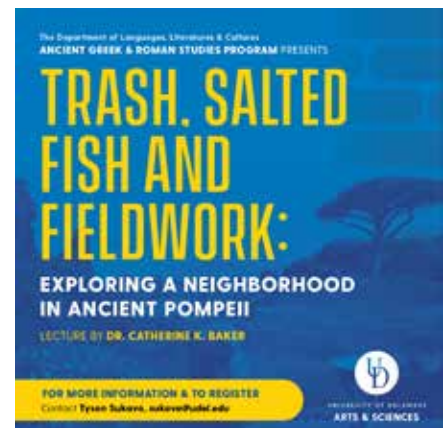
a new interpretation of terminology from a medieval text that sheds light on representations of women in that era.

In December 2020, the DLLC's Faculty Research Workshop Series presented Associate Professor of Chinese Dr. Jianguo Chen Lao Zi's *Tao*, Heidegger's *Being*, and Confucius' *Way*: A Comparative Perspective on the Question of Metaphysics.

In addition to the two pedagogy panels described in the feature article that focused on decolonizing and diversifying the curriculum, two additional workshops were offered by DLLC faculty. In October 2020, Instructor of French and Ed.D. candidate in Educational Leadership Ms. Anna M. Ogunnaike presented her research on the strategic use of Can-Do Statements in course, unit, and lesson design, as well as for student self-assessment. Her presentation was titled "Cultivating a Can-Do Attitude: The use of ACTFL Can-Do Statements in the Postsecondary WL Classroom". In April 2021, the DLLC held a workshop on Teaching Reading Comprehension Online during the Pandemic: Implications for Language Teachers, presented by Associate Professor of

French and Pedagogy Dr. Ali Alalou and Dr. Adil Bentahar, Assistant Professor in the English Language Institute.

The **ANCIENT GREEK AND ROMAN STUDIES PROGRAM** hosted two engaging virtual lectures during the 2020/2021 session. In the Fall semester, Dr. Catherine Baker (Bryn Mawr) presented *Trash, Salted Fish, And Fieldwork: Exploring a Neighborhood in Ancient Pompeii*, in which she explored her work as part of the Pompeii Archaeological Research Project to uncover fascinating aspects of daily life in the buried city. In the Spring, Dr. Rebecca Benefiel (Washington and Lee) presented





*Repopulating the House of the Faun*. Dr. Benefiel led the audience on an illuminating journey through an elite Pompeian home in search of graffiti, shedding light on this form of ancient communication. The talk also celebrated the new inductees into our Eta Sigma Phi Honors Society chapter. Both lectures were presented before lively audiences from the university community, general Delaware public, and beyond.

The **FRENCH STUDIES PROGRAM** welcomed virtual visits by the writer, filmmaker, and Penn State Assistant Professor Fabienne Kanor, author of the novel *Humus*, and Lynn Palermo, Associate

Professor of French at Susquehanna University and DLLC alumna (MALLC French 1992), who translated the work.

The **GERMAN STUDIES PROGRAM**, in collaboration with **Sister Cities of Wilmington**, organized an event for the German Club in recognition of Fulda, German Sister City of Wilmington. As they have traditionally done each spring, German Club members helped to plant flowers in the colors of the German flag in the Friendship Gardens in Wilmington. Pictured below is German Club Treasurer AJ Martin (Mechanical Engineering Major) along with Catherine Coin, of the Delaware Nature Society-DuPont Environmental Education Center.

**REPOPULATING THE HOUSE OF THE FAUN**  
Presentation by Ancient Greek & Roman Studies  
in the Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures

Rebecca Benefiel, Washington and Lee University

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2021 • 7-8:30, via Zoom  
Free and open to the public

The House of the Faun was one of the wealthiest houses in Pompeii to be excavated and it quickly became one of the most famous due to its size, location, and its elaborate mosaic depicting Alexander the Great. These features have overshadowed the people who actually lived and worked in the house in this Roman lecture, Prof. Benefiel provides viewers with an opportunity to reexamine the House of the Faun. The conversations that took place on and within its walls reveal communication strategies in the early Roman empire and shed new light on the house and its inhabitants.

**PROFESSOR REBECCA BENEFIEL** teaches in the Department of Classics at Washington and Lee University. She specializes in Latin, inscription, Roman ethnography, and the social and cultural history of ancient Roman and Mediterranean. She is the director of the Ancient Graffiti Project and President of the American Society of Greek and Latin Epigraphy (ASGLE).

For more information and to register, contact Tegan Sullivan, [tsullivan@wlu.edu](mailto:tsullivan@wlu.edu)



The **JAPANESE STUDIES PROGRAM**, in collaboration with the University of Delaware Anti-Racism Initiative Asian American Sub-Committee and others, presented two films and related discussion sessions. In April, the film **Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice**, about the Japanese-American civil rights activist, was presented, and in May, **American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs** was presented, about the life and achievements of the Chinese-American civil rights activist.

**AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY**  
THE EVOLUTION OF GRACE LEE BOGGS  
GUY CLOUTIER AND LEE ANN HAN

From the University of Delaware Anti-Racism Initiative Asian American Subcommittee

**American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs**

Join UD for a discussion of the film and a conversation with the producer, Grace Lee, and invited panelsists.  
May 5, 2021, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

[Click here to register.](#)  
[To stream the film, click here.](#)



From the University of Delaware Anti-Racism Initiative Asian American Subcommittee

**Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice**

Join UD for a discussion and a conversation with The film's producer, Reo Tajiri, and the Kochiyama Family

April 28, 2021, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

[Click here to register.](#)  
[To stream the film, click here.](#)

"[Kanor] plunges us in the holds of a slave ship in 1774... Her short, suspended sentences allow immersion in the hearts of these agonizing journeys that punctuated the sad episode of slavery."—Le Nouvel Observateur

**HUMUS**  
A Novel  
Fabienne Kanor  
Translated by Lynn E. Palermo

While researching in Nantes, a port city enriched by the slave trade, celebrated French novelist Fabienne Kanor encountered a chilling report written in 1774 by the commander of a slave ship, *Le Soleil*. Captain Louis Mosnier explained the loss of valuable "cargo" when fourteen African women escaped from the ship's hold and leaped overboard into the sea, rather than be taken into slavery. Half of them drowned or were eaten by sharks.

From this historical episode, Kanor has composed a powerful novel that shifts our focus from commerce to the women themselves. In this polyphonic work, each woman tells her own story. Their disparate lives from differing cultures, conditions, and perspectives intersect and interweave through their violent transition from freedom to captivity, and form a chorus in their collective act of resistance.

Fabienne Kanor  
Lynn E. Palermo

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